



# The Juice

A Special Agriculture News Report From...  
Congressman Adam Putnam

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U.S. House of Representatives

## Agricultural Trade Task Force Meets in Washington Members Convey Importance of Citrus Tariff

The Florida Agricultural Trade Task Force met in Washington, DC on March 10-11 for a series of high level meetings with Administration officials to discuss the sensitive nature of citrus trade issues, including a strong message that lowering the tariff on orange juice will not achieve the Administration's trade goals.



Congressman Putnam speaking at the Citrus Hall of Fame

The Task Force, chaired by Congressman Putnam and formed at the request of the President to advise the Administration on Florida trade matters, met with White House political director Ken Mehlman, U.S. Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick and the Special Trade Negotiator for Agriculture, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, and Housing Secretary Mel Martinez of Florida.

The 26-member Trade Task Force, made up of agricultural industry leaders from across the state, also held sessions with key congressional members including Congresswoman

Katherine Harris (FL-13) and Congressman Clay Shaw (FL-22), senior member of the Ways and Means Trade Oversight Subcommittee.

Throughout the Washington meetings, the Trade Task Force told officials that due to the unique international market

conditions for processed orange juice, with production concentrated in two locations in the world – Florida and Sao Paulo, Brazil, any reduction in the citrus tariff will not lead to the stated objectives of free trade including greater competition, consumer benefits, or overall global economic growth.



Florida Agricultural Trade Task Force Convenes in Washington

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## Citrus Canker Compensation and Agriculture Research Funding Approved by Congress

Congress has approved \$18.2 million in continued compensation for Florida citrus growers whose crops have been destroyed due to Citrus Canker. Passage of the Omnibus Appropriations Act in late February provided Citrus Canker compensation funding as well as

several valuable research initiatives vital to Florida agriculture.

The latest installment of Canker compensation funds adds to the \$86 million previously designated by Congress and paid to growers whose trees have been de-

stroyed by Canker. Eligible citrus growers, under the current allocation, must have lost their trees after September 30, 2001. Certified citrus nursery stocks in Citrus Canker quarantine areas are also eligible for loss assistance.

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## Citrus Tariffs *(continued)*

Task Force members emphasized that the citrus industry is one of the most free market sectors of U.S. agriculture, receiving no federal government subsidies. The industry's only offsetting tools are the current tariff and enforcement of existing trade laws.

While progress was made during the Trade Task Force meetings, substantial work remains as the Administration has outlined an ambitious agenda for trade liberalization through the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The U.S. presented its FTAA proposal in February, outlining its objectives:

*“President Bush has made the FTAA proposal a top priority and the proposal would substantially lower trade barriers that limit U.S. farm products across the region. It is an aggressive and bold plan that shows the Administration’s commitment to open and competitive markets,”* according to the Secretary of Agriculture.



Trade Task Force Meets with U.S. Trade Ambassador Robert Zoellick

The U.S. FTAA plan calls for “all tariffs to be on the table in the U.S. market access offer.” Agricultural tariffs would fall into staging categories of 5 years, 10 years, and longer, with processed orange juice falling into the last category of “longer than 10 years.” While the exact terms of this category are unclear, the U.S. Trade Ambassador indicated that this “most sensitive grouping” was ambiguous at this point and subject to negotiations between the trading parties. The U.S. will submit their “improved offers” in July followed by the FTAA ministerial meeting in Miami in November.

## Agriculture Research *(continued)*

In addition, the following agriculture research projects of priority to Florida's citrus industry were also funded by Congress for the fiscal year 2003.

-  Grapefruit Drug Interactive - \$550,000 was designated to gain more precise scientific data on the effect of grapefruit juice consumption on the absorption rates of certain medications. Research will be carried out through the *Florida Department of Citrus, the University of Florida (UF), and Tufts University.*
-  Citrus Canker research- \$500,00 was provided for continuation of critical research on the detection, treatment and means to eliminate this devastating citrus disease that has already resulted in the loss of over 1.7 million commercial citrus trees. *UF - Citrus Research and Education Center Lake Alfred.*
-  Diaprepes Research - \$500,000 through the University of Florida to for research on the Diaprepes Root Weevil. *UF-Lake Alfred.*
-  Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV)- \$750,000 for research on this disease that had a significant impact on Florida citrus production. *UF -Lake Alfred.*

For more information on

University of Florida - Citrus Research and Education Center-Lake Alfred, go to <http://www.lal.ufl.edu/>

Florida Department of Citrus, go to [www.floridajuce.com](http://www.floridajuce.com)

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On March 20, 2003, over 15 members of the Florida Congressional delegation submitted the requests of the Florida citrus industry for fiscal year 2004 for continuation of these important programs and new funding for:



- **mechanical harvesting and abscission chemical registration assistance**
- **citrus genome mapping**
- **citrus waste stream utilization**
- **crop production forecast satellite technology.**

Several other priority Florida agricultural research projects were also requested through the FY 2004 Agriculture Appropriations Act including continuation of funding for the IFAS **International Agricultural Trade and Policy Center.**

## Putnam Developing Legislation to Put More Fruits and Vegetables in Schools

Recognizing the importance of incorporating more fresh fruit, vegetables and 100% juice products in our nation's nutritional programs, Congressman Putnam is currently developing legislation to provide greater access to these commodities for needy Americans through reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act this year.

As Florida is the second largest state in the nation in

the production of fruit and vegetables by facilitating increased consumption of these products, including 100% fruit juices such as orange and grapefruit juice, we can also expand demand for many Florida goods. Such nutritional initiatives also provide a valuable opportunity to instill more healthy eating habits in children, the elderly and the needy.

Through his membership on the House Agriculture

Committee, Rep. Putnam is currently working with the fruit and vegetable sector and a broad-based nutrition coalition to build a strong bipartisan bill to ensure that the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, after school programs, and the Woman, Infants and Children's (WIC) program and others include a greater number of fruit, vegetables, and juice products.



## Florida Agricultural Facts



Florida's nearly 44,000 commercial farmers utilized nearly one third, or 10.3 million, of the state's 35 million acres.

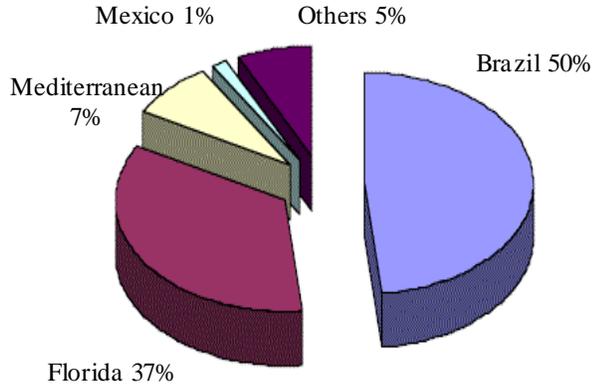


Florida provides 80% of the fresh vegetables grown in the U.S. in the winter months, and leads the nation in the sales of seven major fresh vegetables.



Eight states received over 100% of farm income from the Federal government: Illinois 130%, Iowa 101%, Kansas 111%, Louisiana 103%, Michigan 185%, Minnesota 178%, Montana 156%, North Dakota 160%.

### World Orange Processing



*Source: Florida Citrus Mutual—2000/2001*

## Work Continues as Methyl Bromide Phase-Out Proceeds



*Plants treated with Methyl Bromide (upper) and without Methyl Bromide (lower)*

As Methyl Bromide reached a 70% phase-out level in January 2003, the fruit and vegetable industry continued their efforts to retain access to this critical crop protection tool. Under the terms of the Montreal Protocol, usage of Methyl Bromide is scheduled for a complete phase-out in 2005 unless a "critical use exemption" is adopted by the International Montreal Protocol body. A preliminary decision by the international body is expected in November 2003.

Congressman Putnam and several members of Congress are pursuing all viable avenues to resolve this issue until a workable alternative is found. These efforts include working with the White House and other key members of the Administration and Congress. Methyl Bromide is particularly important to Florida's strawberry, tomato and pepper production. The University of Florida has estimated that Florida's winter vegetable industry could lose up to \$1 billion under a complete phase out of Methyl Bromide.